

EXHIBIT 16  
DATE 1/22/09  
HB 2

Madam Chair and members of the Committee,

My name is Vanessa Ward and I am from Florence, Montana. I have worked at MDSC, Missoula Developmental Service Corporation, at a Group Home for disabled adults for 8 years. I would like to introduce Justin, who is one of the individuals who lives in this Group Home.

I work with individuals with disabilities to help better their quality of life and because it is rewarding when we do help them. It is difficult to stay working this job because of the insufficient rates providers receive.

I am a mother of 4 children ages 15,13,11 and 8. I am currently working 3 jobs and 70 hours a week to provide my basic needs. This does not cover anything else. It is a struggle to make ends meet and I live paycheck to paycheck.

With the high turnover rate of workers due to the pay not meeting basic needs, the continuity of care for individuals is lacking. Individuals have to learn to work with new staff and this poses issues. Individuals develop a rapport with staff and have to re-learn that with new staff time & time again.

We are striving for a provider rate increase so we can continue to work with people who need us and not have to seek a job that pays more.

Thank-you for your time & consideration and please support a provider rate increase for workers in the DD field.

Vanessa Ward

11/16